Curtis Specialty Papers

New Jersey

EPA ID#: NJD057143984

EPA REGION 2

Congressional District(s): 12

Hunterdon

404 Frenchtown Road

NPL LISTING HISTORY
Proposed Date: 9/3/2008
Final Date: 9/23/2009

Site Description

The Curtis Specialty Papers site is a former paper mill occupying approximately 109 acres at 404 Frenchtown Road in Hunterdon County, New Jersey. Most of the site is on two parcels totaling about 70 acres that are located in Milford Township. The aeration pond is on an adjacent parcel of approximately 35 acres located in Alexandria Township.

The site includes a number of buildings, including the main mill building, former coatings facility, a cogeneration power plant, and a wastewater treatment plant. The paper mill operated for approximately 90 years. The main mill, known as the Milford Mill, is comprised of approximately 61 separate areas and was used to convert paper pulp to finished food grade paper. The former coatings facility is located approximately 400 feet northwest of the main Milford Mill building. The coatings facility operated from approximately 1935 to 1988; in these buildings, solvent-based resins were compounded and coated onto paper and other products.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with the nearest residences approximately 0.1 mile to the north and southeast. Quequacommissacong Creek, officially known as Hakihokake Creek, is located on the site. Part of Quequacommisacong Creek also is known as Milford Creek.

From 1907 to 1971, the Milford Mill was operated by the Riegel Paper Corporation. It was purchased by Riegel Paper Corporation in 1972, which later became part of the James River Paper Company, Inc. In 1995, the mill was bought by Crown Vantage, which operated it until 2001. In 2001, the mill was bought and operated by Curtis Papers, Inc. During the time the mill was in operation, the facility reported several spills on the property. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) issued several notices of violation to the facility. The notices of violation included unpermitted discharges and improper containers, training, and recordkeeping. The facility also held air permits and New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits, operated a wastewater treatment plant, and utilized numerous USTs. In July 2003, the mill was shut down and, in November 2004, Curtis Paper, Inc. declared bankruptcy.

Threat and Contaminants

The primary contaminant is polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). PCBs have been detected in soil located within areas at the facility and in sediment of Quequacommisacong Creek at locations which are used for fishing for human consumption.

Cleanup Approach

The site was proposed for inclusion on the National Priorities List on September 3, 2008 and listed as final on September 23, 2009.

Cleanup Progress

In August 2001, Curtis Papers, Inc. submitted a preliminary assessment report and remedial investigation work plan to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) as part of the state's Industrial Site Recovery Act. The company identified 20 areas of concern at the Curtis Specialty Papers site. In July 2003, Curtis Papers, Inc. shut down its operations. The facility was closed down and left unsecured. On October 20, 2006, NJDEP and its emergency response contractor began activities that included securing oil and hazardous materials containers, classifying materials for waste disposal, inspecting above ground storage tanks, collecting and stowing empty containers at the former

hazardous materials storage area, and transporting and disposing of materials. Approximately two dozen drums and lab packs were removed from the facility.

In May 2007, EPA tasked the EPA Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) contractor to perform a removal assessment at the Curtis Specialty Papers facility. On May 4, 2007, START mobilized to the facility and met with EPA to conduct a site walk and discuss the upcoming multimedia sampling event. In August 2007, START returned to the Curtis Specialty Papers facility to collect additional soil samples in AOCs and sediment samples from Quequacommissacong Creek. The soil samples collected from the 2007 investigation identified the presence of PCBs in AOCs known to be used for the storage of PCB-containing transformers, waste materials, and other miscellaneous materials. PCBs also were identified in the bank soil of Quequacommissacong Creek and in the sediment of one of the facility's discharge pipes. The presence of PCBs in the bank soil of Quequacommissacong Creek and in one of the discharge pipes to Quequacommissacong Creek indicates PCB contamination from the Curtis Papers facility has migrated to banks of Quequacommissacong Creek through various outfalls from the facility into Quequacommissacong Creek. The locations of the bank soil samples containing PCBs have been documented to be flooded by Quequacommissacong Creek. PCBs were detected in a sediment sample collected from Quequacommissacong Creek downstream of the facility outfalls. The presence of PCBs in areas known to be used for the storage of PCBs, in banks of Quequacommissacong Creek, in the sediment (sludge) of a discharge pipe from the facility, and in the sediment of Quequacommissacong Creek downstream of the facility outfalls, indicates that the Curtis Specialty Papers site has released PCBs to Quequacommissacong Creek.

In June 2009, EPA executed a Settlement Agreement and Administrative Order on Consent with Georgia-Pacific Consumer Products and International Paper for performance of the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS). Under the June 2009 Administrative Order, the two companies have improved security surveillance, installed lighting and fencing to discourage trespassers, and removed oil-containing transformers/capacitors and some presumed asbestos-containing material from the Site. The RI/FS work is underway.

Site Repositories

USEPA Records Center 290 Broadway, 18th floor New York, NY 10007 (212) 637-4308

Milford Public Library 40 Frenchtown Road Milford, NJ 08848 (908) 995-4072